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REPUBLICAN-PROGRESSIVE FUSION IMPOSSIBLE

BY MEDILL McCORMICK

FORMER JUDGE GROSSCUP's argument for Republican-Progressive fusion published in the March number of *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* should be supplemented by a consideration of the difficulties of organizing a party representing the elements comprised in the Progressive and Republican parties of 1912.

The American system of government and the elaborateness of our electoral machinery make political coalition and political fusion more difficult here than in other countries. The election of a single executive tends, first to hold men of varied views within uneasy party bonds, but, secondly, to prevent the organization of parliamentary coalitions such as are common in continental Europe, and such a one as to-day supports the British Government.

For this reason, during a long period, men holding almost irreconcilable opinions joined in Republican conventions, wrote themselves down in the Congressional Directory as Republican, entered Republican caucuses, just as Mr. Wilson and Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Bryan, and Mr. Taggart, Mr. Brandeis, and Mr. Murphy are among the conspicuous leaders of the Democratic party.

This difference among Republicans found its first expression through the Insurgent group in the House, and later through the united action of the progressive Republican group in the Senate.

The campaign for the Republican Presidential nomination which followed, was but the logical outcome of the split in the House and the Senate. The personalities of two men could not have aroused the interest and the passion which marked the primary fights in Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania,

Massachusetts, New Jersey, and elsewhere, nor could they have been the sole cause of the events in the Republican National Convention of 1912, the organization of the Progressive party, and the nomination of Progressive candidates for State and Congressional offices in 1912. We hear, of course, that Mr. Prendergast, who did not receive the Progressive nomination for Governor of New York in 1912, has gone back to the Republican party. We hear, likewise, that Mr. Walker, who was the Republican candidate for Governor of Massachusetts in that year, has transferred his allegiance to the Progressive party. In West Virginia the Republican State Committee and part of the Progressive State Committee seem to have decided upon common action within the State "without prejudice to separate interests in national politics." But, on the other hand, in Oklahoma, Nebraska, and South Dakota steps have been taken for the first time to organize the Progressive party as a separate political entity, with candidates for all offices for which partisan nominations usually are made.

In 1912 the nomination of Congressional candidates on the Progressive ticket was the exception. In 1914 Progressives will be nominated for Congress in all districts where nominations are made by both old parties, and in some districts in the South where Republican nominations are not usually made.

Forty of the Republican National Committeemen (whom Progressives believe defrauded them of the right to nominate a candidate and to write a platform in 1912, or whom Republicans believe preserved the party from capture by the radicals) remain members of the Republican National Committee. The Progressive National Committee is composed chiefly of men who bitterly, but unsuccessfully, resisted the action of this same Republican National Committee in 1912.

The indications are, then, that there is a more complete organized difference between the two parties in 1914 than there was in 1912.

Judge Grosseup suggests that the Republican National Committee call a joint convention of the two parties in 1916, and that in States like Illinois, Pennsylvania, and New York "some well-known man of liberal tendencies . . . come out for the nomination for Senator at the primaries of both parties." His proposals are based upon the assumption that it will be possible to draft a political programme upon

which Republicans and Progressives can be united. There are two obstacles in the way of the consummation of Judge Grosscup's proposals—the present legal constitution of the parties and the widely divergent views of many Republicans and many Progressives. Although he be learned in the law, Judge Grosscup forgets that in his own State of Illinois no one may be a candidate in the primaries of two parties or the nominee of more than one party. This is true in the majority of States in which primaries are established by statute. The legal organization of parties during the last decade did not contemplate the creation or existence of a new party of the first importance, nor the possibility or the desirability of fusion. The lack of party flexibility in many States prohibits not merely the nomination of candidates for the Senate along the lines suggested by Judge Grosscup, but affects the constitution of national conventions and the election of delegates thereto. Delegates to national conventions to be elected in legal primaries, in States like California, Massachusetts, Ohio, or Illinois, must first become candidates before the people in the primary election established by statute, and in such primaries avow themselves to be candidates, belonging to a regularly recognized party, proposing to nominate a certain named aspirant for a Presidential nomination. A Republican-Progressive or a Progressive-Republican convention, called by the Republican National Committee, as Judge Grosscup would have it called, would have to include *two sets* of delegates thus separately elected as Progressives and as Republicans, or it would have to be composed of delegates whose original popular mandate came from local *mass* conventions.

Not to be hypercritical, is it probable that Progressives would care to engage with Republicans in a contest for delegates, elected by mass conventions, while the memory of the disposition of the contests of 1912 by the Republican National Committee still lives?

But let us assume that, although there will be no candidates for conspicuous offices in 1914 nominated by both the Progressive and the Republican parties, and although the difficulty of assembling delegates of both parties in a common national convention is apparently insurmountable, the technical means for bringing together such representative delegates can be found. Their coming together would be for the purpose of uniting upon a Presidential and

a Vice-Presidential candidate and of adopting a common platform. Before we consider their differences in programme, I ought to point out that in a recent article Mr. Taft said that the chief object of the Republican party should be to defeat the Progressive party, and that some time since Mr. Roosevelt said that the condition of amalgamation must be the political banishment of the leading members of the Republican National Committee and the adoption of the Progressive platform by the Republican party. It may be said that the views of the two Presidential candidates should not be controlling, but confessedly they are representative of elements within the two parties.

What then can be found in the two platforms as a basis for political union? What, if any, are the irreconcilable differences between the Progressive and the Republican platforms?

Judge Grosscup's purpose in proposing fusion is to organize a "fighting opposition" to the Democratic trust programme and to check the political radicalism toward which he feels certain extreme Progressives would lead us. He sees in the Democratic trust programme now under consideration in Congress an attempt to enforce a return to unrestricted competition which will bring upon us grave financial depression, because it is incompetent for purposes of modern production. He does not say specifically what trust programme would unite Republicans and Progressives. His article, doubtless, was written before the recent epistolary exchange between Senator Borah and Mr. Perkins, but even so, it is possible that he has in mind a system of regulated competition and regulated co-operation for which President Van Hise of the University of Wisconsin is the principal spokesman. One may disagree with Mr. George W. Perkins that the Steel Corporation can be defended successfully before the bar of public opinion and still hold that under government supervision, through a powerful commission, there can be co-operation between corporations and between men in trade-unions, of benefit to the public as well as to the unions or the corporations.

Let us, for the sake of argument, assume that it will be possible for a majority of the opposition to Democracy to agree upon such a trust programme as alternative to Mr. Wilson's.

It was the Aldrich tariff bill which precipitated the re-

bellion against the controlling organization of the Republican party. It is certain that within a generation we shall not see another "robber" tariff. Republicans and Progressives alike are opposed to the actual Democratic tariff, and although they differ as between the two parties and as between the localities which they represent regarding the degree of protection desired, yet it is conceivable that Republicans and Progressives could unite in a demand for more protection than is afforded by the Underwood law, to be secured only after investigation and report by a competent and non-partisan tariff commission. Doubtless the two parties now could unite in a hearty condemnation of the Democratic civil service record, alike in its diplomatic and domestic appointments. Doubtless they could unite in reprobation of its Mexican and Philippine policies. But could they unite on the economic and political reforms which first were widely agitated in the last campaign? Could Mr. Taft's followers, horrified at the suggested recall of judges and of judicial decisions, find common ground with the advocates of these profanations of the judiciary? To be sure, Senator Crawford of South Dakota is running for a renomination in a Republican primary, upon a platform demanding the recall of decisions. To be sure the recall of decisions has been approved by a Republican convention in Oklahoma, and has been incorporated in the constitution of Colorado. The recall now is applicable to the judiciary in Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington. But is it conceivable that Mr. Taft and his horrified following would ever consent to an approval either of the recall of judges or of decisions? There would be a difference of opinion over the Progressives' purpose to make easier the amendment of the National Constitution, almost as sharp as that over the principle of the recall, and this would be true of the whole Progressive programme for democratizing governments, State as well as National, whether through the extension of primaries or through the adoption of the initiative and referendum, although Progressives, generally, are prepared to adopt measures to protect the use of the initiative as suggested by the experience of some States in which the initiative has been abused.

Of the five or six devices which the Progressives propose for rendering American government more responsive, and therefore more responsible, the short ballot is the only one

which would not arouse sharp contention between a majority of the conspicuous members of the Progressive and Republican parties.

The political programme of the Progressives has for its purpose, of course, the adoption of an economic programme which in the past has been obstructed by the control of governmental machinery by interests opposed to drastic economic reforms. The economic struggles of the last twenty years have raged about the currency, the tariff, and the trusts, but for the time being the currency almost wholly, and the tariff to a considerable degree, have ceased to be contentious matters of the very first importance, the Progressives holding that the settlement of the trust problem by no means reaches the root of the economic troubles of the country. Like the Democrats, the Progressives demand an income tax. They believe in its graduation, but, unlike the Democrats, they advocate an inheritance tax, in addition to an income tax, not merely for the purpose of raising revenues, but to discourage, if not actually to prevent, the transmission of swollen fortunes from generation to generation. Unconsciously the Progressives have absorbed, by way of the British Liberals, some of the economic philosophy which Germany for a generation has been learning from Schmoller and Wagner.

Under the head of " Social and Industrial Justice " in the Progressive platform there are some twenty-three planks, to which ought to be added one or two others found elsewhere in the platform. A study of those planks shows that it was the purpose of the Progressive convention to secure legislation which would make the working masses, whether engaged in farming or industrial labor, better off—not merely absolutely better off, but relatively so. For this reason Progressives declared, for example, for industrial insurance, of which the burden should be borne by the industry, this insurance to protect the worker against poverty in old age, sickness, and irregular employment. There were declarations, too, for limitations of the hours of labor, for the improvement of the condition of working-women, for the establishment of a minimum wage for women, and for the prohibition of the labor of children. There was a demand for State aid to farmers. Together with these there was an unequivocal declaration that the power of the National Government should be invoked where the authority of the State

was inadequate to meet the problem, and that if need be there should be Constitutional amendment to confer upon the National Government the powers necessary for such a purpose.

Democrats, misrepresenting the attitude of Progressives in regard to monopolies, and Republicans, seeking to misrepresent them regarding the democratization of government, to a very considerable extent focused public attention on the trust question and on the mooted recall of judicial decisions. Thus it was that too little attention was directed to the social-economic programme of the Progressive party, which involves not merely a wide extension of the field of National legislation, but also an invasion not only of a field hitherto occupied by the State, but a field in which the individual hitherto has been free from any State intervention.

The far-reaching consequences of these proposals has not been appreciated. For the first time a National party has put forward a programme of immediate and searching interest alike to farmers and to urban workers who do not own their own businesses or who are business men in a very small way. Europe is familiar with the radical legislation proposed by the Progressive party, but a certain element in American political and commercial life is shocked by what seems to it an almost revolutionary programme. Many politicians have been inclined to believe that "social and industrial justice" was merely a fine phrase to touch the sentiment of the people, but that there were no new reasons why it should now make an especial appeal to the electorate.

There are to-day about two million children employed in the industries of the country, and the child-labor legislation, say of Wisconsin and Massachusetts notoriously, encourages the establishment of mills in the Carolinas and Georgia, where such labor is permitted. There are in the United States seven million or more women who earn their own livelihood. Over one-half the persons in the United States who are engaged in gainful occupations (not members of families living on farms) are in the employment of others. The earnings of an average American family (of which two members are employed), are less than eight hundred dollars a year.

It is estimated that during a part of the last winter there were in the great cities of the country over half a million men idle through no fault of their own.

Rubinow, in his great work on social insurance, says that a third of the aged people north of the Mason and Dixon line and east of the Rocky Mountains are the recipients of military pensions, so that already a large proportion of the aged in America actually enjoy old-age pensions.

Excepting only the figures regarding the number of persons unemployed and those receiving pensions, all these figures may be roughly halved to represent conditions twenty years ago. In this short time the United States has undergone an industrial change which has produced here social conditions like those of Europe. Families living only three days from want, families which must regard the unemployment or sickness and the old age of an individual as a calamity for the whole family, are far more concerned about governmental provision to lighten the burden of sickness and of old age, to mitigate the hardships of unemployment and to diminish its likelihood, than they are in the remoter economic problems which hitherto have interested the country. Unemployment is as much a National problem as is that of child labor. If the authority of the National Government need be invoked to abolish child labor, so must it be invoked to fix the conditions of certain classes of labor for women. Will Mr. Rockefeller, who contributed to the last Republican campaign fund in New York State, will Mr. Brandegee of Connecticut, or Mr. Sherman of Illinois, will Mr. Sterling of South Dakota, or Mr. Penrose of Pennsylvania agree to the "invasion of the rights of the States"—to Federal control of conditions of employment, called for by the Progressive programme? Or will Progressives like Governor Johnson of California, Mr. Parker of Louisiana, Mr. Beveridge of Indiana, Miss Addams of Illinois, and Colonel Roosevelt in New York abandon that programme in order to join in a "fighting opposition" to the economic philosophy of President Wilson—abandon the programme to some other men and women who are prepared to put it forward in the interest of the majority, which works for hire, for a living? I venture to suggest that Progressive abandonment of these proposals is as utterly improbable as Progressive abandonment of the campaign for the initiative and for Presidential primaries.

I would suggest that a second schism within the Republican party at present appears as likely as a successful union of the Republican and Progressive parties through

such a plan as that proposed by Judge Grosscup. Already the Republicans of South Dakota and Oklahoma have embraced Progressive apostasies. In Maryland and Michigan they have adopted many of our heretical beliefs. The differences among those who still call themselves Republicans are represented by the men conspicuous in the councils of the party—Mr. La Follette and Mr. Barnes, Mr. Penrose and Mr. Cummins, Mr. Guggenheim and Mr. Bristow, Mr. Smoot and Mr. Borah, Mr. Gronno and Mr. Taft. Some of them make no concealment of their hope that Theodore Roosevelt will be the Republican nominee in 1916, while others profess to believe that he is the arch-enemy of our Constitution, of our liberties, and of our prosperity. These irreconcilable elements cannot continue to share the leadership of a party. One must control at the cost of the other. In pursuing an independent course Progressives are not only actuated by devotion to the platform which they adopted, but also by the belief that the Republican party under its present divided leadership cannot frame and carry into law a constructive and progressive programme. They feel, too, that the time is not far off when the questions of Nationalism and of social legislation will divide the Democracy. They continue along their own path in the belief that their numbers will be augmented by recruits from the Democratic as well as the Republican party. On the other hand, if Mr. Taft represents those Republicans whose nominee he was in 1912, they are not only bent on the defeat of the Progressive programme, but expect to remain in the minority until 1924, supporting his concept of our proper constitutional and economic development.

MEDILL McCORMICK.